

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Robert R. Bowie
Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

SUBJECT : The Status of Work on Presidential
Intelligence Priorities (Twenty
Questions)

1. Action Requested: This memorandum is for your information only.

2. Background: You will recall that, back in the early summer, the responsibility for this project rested with the NSC Staff, to which you, State, OSD, and the JCS contributed suggested subjects that might be included in the list. After some six weeks of NSC Staff inaction, the responsibility was passed to me. Repeated efforts on my part to get a promised contribution from David Aaron were unproductive.

3. In late August, we decided to go ahead without a contribution from the NSC Staff. In approaching the problem, it seemed to me that the PRC will wish to make sure that the Intelligence Community devotes itself not only to furnishing information of immediate policy concern, but also to providing basic research on subjects that will be of policy concern over a protracted period of time. Consequently, I concluded that a two-tiered approach was appropriate. My staff and I set to work, accordingly, and developed a sample list of broad topics of basic long-term interest, intended to guide our long-range efforts in analysis and collection, and pointing the way to more specific topics for basic National Intelligence Estimates. We developed also a sample list of issues of immediate interest, most of which were, in fact, subsets of the sample list of the more basic topics.

4. These sample lists were circulated in late September STAT to those persons I was able to identify as the representatives of OSD, JCS, State, Treasury, and the NSC Staff. After no

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small effort, this group was finally convened twice in October (minutes attached). The group agreed to the two-tiered approach, but it wished the sample list of immediate issues to be posed as questions. Accordingly, we appointed a working group to collect and sift through these questions.

5. The working group ended up with some 120 sets of questions. Unfortunately, the vast majority came from State/INR; OSD did not contribute any; Treasury provided only three; and the NSC Staff supplied us only with an internal working document which was almost unintelligible. The working group started working its way through this material on Thursday and will finish its first look this afternoon. No NSC representative was able to participate. The chairman plans this weekend to produce a synthesized list that reflects the group's comments. I will review it on Monday, at which point I will have to decide whether the list is in decent enough shape to take to my group, thus speeding up the process, or whether the working group will have to give the list a second review next week.

Robert R. Bowie

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